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LETTER DATED 19 JULY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 18 July 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq. The letter concerns the provocative and hostile acts committed by United States and other warplanes and warships during the period 1 January to 30 June 1997. These craft violated Iraqi airspace and territorial waters, searched Iraqi vessels inside Iraqi territorial waters and terrorized the peaceful inhabitants of Iraqi towns.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 14 July 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to my letter of 9 January 1997 (S/1997/28, annex), which contained detailed information on the hostile actions undertaken by United States and other aircraft while violating Iraqi airspace from military bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait between 1 July and 31 December 1996. That letter also gave examples of provocative actions carried out by United States and other warships inside the territorial waters of the Republic of Iraq during the same period.

I should like in the present letter to alert you to the fact that between 1 January and 30 June 1997 United States and other warplanes continued to violate the airspace of the Republic of Iraq from military bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and to engage in such hostile, provocative and inflammatory actions as the dropping of heat flares in civilian areas and on civilian installations in Iraq. A number of United States and other warships also provoked Iraqi civilian vessels inside Iraqi territorial waters. These incidents, examples of which are set forth hereunder, were reported to the United Nations Secretariat and documented by us at the time they first occurred.

1. At 1500 hours on 12 January 1997 a number of United States warplanes dropped five incendiary heat flares 10 kilometres to the south of Dohuk in northern Iraq, terrorizing the citizens of that region.

2. At 1300 hours on 14 January 1997, four miles to the south of Mina' al-Bakr, a United States frigate searched the Iraqi fishing boat Shatt al-Arab. At 1410 hours on the same day, the men from the United States frigate departed, having searched the fuel and water tanks and every other part of the boat.

3. On 14 February 1997 a Saudi Arabian helicopter violated Iraqi airspace in Muthanna Governorate. At 1300 hours on 15 February 1997 a similar violation was committed, 4 kilometres inside the Iraqi borders.

4. At 1915 hours on 16 February 1997 six Saudi Arabian helicopters violated Iraqi airspace in the area between Makhfari (Faris) and Safawi to a depth of 4 kilometres.

5. At 0100 hours on 28 February 1997 a helicopter from the United States frigate FFG 40 flew over the Iraqi dredger Najaf in the Shatt al-Arab 11 kilometres to the south-east of Ra's al-Bisha, inside Iraqi territorial waters. The master of the dredger was ordered to cast anchor, and at 0710 hours of the same day the aforementioned United States frigate carried out a search of the dredger which continued until 1020 hours.

6. At 2035 hours on 6 March 1997 a United States helicopter repeatedly hovered very low over the Iraqi tug Hit in the Shatt al-Arab channel inside Iraqi territorial waters.

7. At 0735 hours on 9 March 1997 a Kuwaiti helicopter flew very low over the Iraqi tug Hamdan near buoy No. 15, and carried out provocative actions against the tug.

8. At 0800 hours on 19 March 1997 United States frigates FFG 33 and FFG 40 carried out manoeuvres to the south of Mina' al-Bakr. At 1030 hours on the same day a United States helicopter overflew Iraqi boats near buoy No. 5. A United States helicopter then overflew the Iraqi fishing boat Diyala in the same position inside Iraqi territorial waters.

9. At 1900 hours on 15 April 1997 a United States naval helicopter flew over the area near buoy No. 13 inside Iraqi territorial waters.

10. At 1300 hours on 17 April 1997 a helicopter armed with two rockets from the United States frigate Halyburton positioned south of the port of al-Bakr and the deep-water port flew very low over an Iraqi patrol boat near buoy No. 15.

11. At 1850 hours on 21 April 1997 a United States naval helicopter flew very low over the area near buoy No. 13 inside Iraqi territorial waters, then flew off towards the Kuwaiti coast.

We condemn these acts of aggression and provocation by the United States and others, and we request you to intervene with the countries in question, as is required of you in accordance with the responsibility entrusted to you under the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to halting and preventing any recurrence of such violations and unwarranted acts of aggression. The countries whose aircraft and ships carry out these acts and those in which the aircraft are based are to be held fully accountable for them, for the damage they cause and for the threats of a security-related, economic and moral nature that they pose to Iraq and the Iraqi people.

I likewise affirm the legally established right of the Republic of Iraq to compensation for the material and other damage inflicted on it by the commission of acts that are in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international public law, in accordance with the principle of State responsibility.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq